

THE MOUNTED RIFLEMAN

3d ARMORED CAVALRY REGIMENT

December 2008



Ready to redeploy

THE MOUNTED RIFLEMAN



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Cavalry Regiment**

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The Mounted Rifleman is the official publication for the Troopers, Noncommissioned Officers, Officers, family members and friends of the 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment. Views expressed herein are those of the authors.

The Mounted Rifleman is the primary Command Information tool of the Regimental command leadership. Its mission is to foster esprit de corps, enhance morale and keep troopers informed throughout the Regiment.

ABOUT THIS

ISSUE

We have now reached the end of our deployment. As many of you read this edition of *The Mounted Rifleman*, we will be packing up our containers, preparing to ship our equipment back to Fort Hood, and returning to our families and friends.

By all standards, this has been a successful mission. All of the locations the Brave Rifles have deployed to are now better off than when we first arrived.

The main effort of the Regiment's deployment, Mosul, has seen great improvements. Markets are open, traffic is flowing throughout the city and the government is working at improving the basic services and rebuilding the city's infrastructure to help the city prosper.

The Soldiers in the Regiment have faced a tough optempo that never slowed down during the deployment, and as expected, the Troopers of the Regiment accomplished the missions placed before them.

The Soldiers should be proud of their accomplishments.

The achievements, however, have not been without great sacrifice. We will always remember and honor our Fallen Heroes.

- The Editor

Contact Information

If you have any suggestions or would like to submit articles or photographs to the *Mounted Rifleman*, e-mail timothy.volkert@us.army.mil or call the Regimental Public Affairs Office at SVOIP 573-2097 or DSN 849-5270.

Visit the 3d ACR online for more news

The *Mounted Rifleman* and other photos, news releases and information are available on the 3d ACR's Web site: http://www.hood.army.mil/3d_acr

Visit the site often as the information is updated regularly.



3d Armored Cavalry Regiment



Cover photo by Master Sgt. Tim Volkert

Left/Cover: Sgt. Frederick Odell from Ironhawk Troop, 3rd Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, ground guides a vehicle at the redeployment staging area on Forward Operating Base Marez, Iraq, in late September. The Army is using the 3d ACR redeployment as a pilot program to test a new method to redeploy equipment. (See story on Page 20.)

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Photos by Sgt. Matthew Boyd

Col. Michael Bills, commander, 3d ACR, speaks to Longknife Squadron Soldiers during a visit to the 4/3 ACR area of operation at Camp Stryker in Baghdad Nov. 9.

As Americans enjoy this holiday season with opportunity to reflect on the many blessings and benefits of living in a country based on freedom and democracy, they can be thankful for the services and sacrifices our Troopers have made across Iraq.

Though conditions have improved and attack levels are at the lowest since 2003 across Iraq, we are still a nation at war in extraordinary and dangerous times.

Our Troopers continue to stand in harm's way protecting the freedom of Americans by standing shoulder to shoulder with our Iraqi counterparts, defeating those who do not want change or success in Iraq.

There is still much work to do to improve the livelihood of the Iraqi's here in Ninewa

Province from the governance to economics.

You can be rightly proud of your accomplishments in taking back a city that was under siege 13 months ago, improving conditions in Diyala Province and providing the air necessary to allow transition in Baghdad. With our Troopers still focused on the fight while preparing to redeploy, you continue to demonstrate unparalleled courage, skill and commitment to succeed.

May each of you have a safe and joyful holiday season. God bless each of you, your Families, our Regiment, our Army and the United States of America

Brave Rifles!

Michael A. Bills

72nd Colonel of the Regiment



Col. Michael Bills, commander, 3d ACR, discusses the next ground movement after visiting the Ali al Hamara neighborhood in Mosul.



Col. Michael Bills, commander, 3d ACR, re-enlists Spc. Matthew Bevington from Ironhawk Troop, Thunder Squadron, 3d ACR, on FOB Marez, Nov. 28.



Sgt. Matthew Boyd

Spc. John Cunningham with HHT, RSS, 3d ACR, receives his end of tour Army Commendation Medal from Col. Michael Bills, commander, 3d ACR, during an awards ceremony, Dec. 2, on FOB Marez.

A message from the XVII CSM of the Regiment



Photos by Sgt. Matthew Boyd

Col. Michael Bills, commander, 3d ACR (right), and Command Sgt. Maj. William Burns, command sergeant major, 3d ACR (left), speak with Capt. Carlos Flynn, commander, Co. A, 1-8 Inf. Regt. (left center), prior to departure from COP Rock in Mosul, Nov. 13.

Soldiers and families of the Regiment: As you read this issue of the Mounted Rifleman, the Soldiers are now beginning to pack their containers and prepare for redeployment. While we are still focused on the mission and continue to take the fight to the enemy, it is nice to be able to also look ahead to coming home.

As we await the arrival of our replacements and look forward to showing them the AO and how we conduct our operations, it is critical that we remain focused on completing our mission. We have maintained our standards and OPTEMPO the entire deployment and the RCO and I cannot be more pleased with your conduct.

You have relentlessly pursued the enemy and captured or killed them while showing compassion and understanding for the area's residents. Throughout Ninewa Province, Diyala Province and Baghdad, wherever the Brave Rifles have served this deployment, they have upheld the traditions of the

Regiment of Mounted Riflemen with courage and honor.

Our sister units that have served by our side have been equally impressive and together, we have formed an unbeatable team. The results of your actions are evident wherever you look. Violent actions are down, growth is occurring and residents of the cities and villages under our watch have been regaining a semblance of normality they have not seen in quite some time.

We have worked long, hard hours and it has paid off. The progress has come in small steps from a market re-opening to villagers slowly beginning to trust our Soldiers and our Iraqi Security Force partners and beginning to provide tips about caches and insurgents in their areas.

These small improvements have been steadily occurring throughout the deployment and when you look back from our vantage point now, you can see the big picture and the success your efforts have

produced.

Most of you haven't taken the time to look back to see this improvement because you have maintained your focus on wiping out the insurgents and working toward continued improvements. The RCO and I could not have asked for a better team.

As we begin the rip process with the next unit, it is critical that we provide the best transition possible and set them up for success. Share all of the lessons learned so that they can continue to build on your successes. We owe it to them and to the Iraqi population to maintain the momentum we have generated during our deployment.

As we get back home, we will conduct the re-integration process with the same focus with which we have conducted ourselves here. We owe it to our families to take full advantage of the courses offered to us while transitioning back from a war zone. Your families are anxiously awaiting your return home. The classes we will attend are there to ensure our transition home is a positive experience and will



Command Sgt. Maj. William Burns, command sergeant major of the 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, speaks with an Iraqi police officer at One West in Mosul, Oct. 17.

provide valuable information to make sure we are well prepared to move back into our daily lives in the states.

The last point I want to leave you with is to maintain your OPSEC while talking to families. Everyone is going to be excited and anxious to see our families and friends again, but remember that the enemy is still out there and looking for information to exploit. Do not be the person to inadvertently help the enemy. The FRGs back home have the systems

in place to let your loved-ones know when you will be arriving. Take the time now to ensure your families and friends have your unit's FRG contact information. They will take care of your family and provide them all the information they need to know about your homecoming.

You have all conducted yourselves with honor during this deployment and upheld the traditions of the U.S. Army and the Regiment of Mounted Riflemen. Continue to stay focused on your mission and the fight.



Command Sgt. Maj. William Burns, command sergeant major, 3d ACR, speaks with 1st Sgt. Ronald Graves of Grim Troop, 2nd Squadron, 3d ACR, at Al Hamara, Oct. 31.

**Brave Rifles!
RCSM**

REMINGTON

Headquarters Troop, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment



Capt. William Nance
Remington Troop Commander

Hello again from Mosul! As we begin the final countdown to redeployment, the troop continues its pursuit of excellence while preparing the Regiment for the transition back to Fort Hood.

The heat has finally broken and most have switched their air conditioners off and turned on the heaters at night. With the transition to fall we have even seen some rain showers. The rain is welcomed because it keeps the dust down, although it also creates lots of mud for us to deal with.

The Regimental staff has been keeping particularly busy, coordinating not only the daily operations of the Regiment, but also planning redeployment operations and integrating Sabre Squadron back into the Regiment after its long sojourn in Diyala Province. Despite these challenges, the staff has performed brilliantly, despite the crushing of some of their morale due to the Cowboy's poor performance.

At the beginning of October, we had the pleasure of hosting our replacement unit on their pre-deployment site survey. Although they are still a couple of months away from arriving, just seeing the new faces was a good thing and raised spirits tremendously.

The Troop HQ has kept busy as well, preparing all the containers and vehicles for movement to the rear. It feels great to be in the process as the end of the deployment is in sight.

At the beginning of November, most of us celebrated our one year anniversary in country with near-beer and barbeques. We plan on celebrating Thanksgiving with a special meal in the DFAC prepared by our great cooks.

The Thanksgiving banner from the FRG arrived the other day and is now hanging prominently in the headquarters gym area so everyone can see it as they come to work out.

The recent ban on thumb drives has really made life interesting in the troop as Soldiers accustomed to using their drives for everything can now no longer use them.

Needless to say, there have been some adjustment pains, but by

and large, the troop is responding well to the new restrictions. The ban had to be put in place due to the large number of viruses on the DoD and CENTCOM networks. Hopefully, a more permanent solution will be forthcoming.

This will be the last time I write to you in this forum. The next time we speak will be in person as the Regiment returns home from deployment - Mission Accomplished.

Thank you again for all your support to the Soldiers of Remington during this marathon of a deployment.

Brave Rifles!
Remington 6



Sgt. Matthew Boyd

Spc. William Tomassini gets pinned by Sgt. 1st Class Richard Aaron during a Remington Troop promotion and awards ceremony at FOB Marez in October.

TIGER

1st Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment



Lt. Col. Thomas Dorame
Tiger Squadron Commander

As expected, the men of Tiger Squadron continue to win the peace and security in southern Ninewa.

Together with our Iraqi partners, we have tamed the insurgency that roamed free in the desert of the Jazeerah and plagued the Iraqi communities and people in the Tigris River Valley.

Through our relentless and tireless pursuit of the remaining recalcitrant insurgents in the region, we have achieved a sustainable level of security. With the thousands of patrols and combat missions, we have denied the Tigris River Valley from being the insurgent safe-haven it once was.



Courtesy Photo

Spc. Michael G. Delgadillo, personell security detail, Roughrider Troop, 1st Sqdrn., 3d ACR, pulls security during a Tiger Claw mission in Sharqat.

We have trained and established a capable Iraqi Security Force that is respected by the people it serves. We have provided security and stability that will be the foundation for lasting peace in the region.

"Our achievements are the result of strong work by the entire Tiger Team."

***-- Lt. Col. Thomas Dorame
commander, 1st Sqdrn., 3d ACR***

Through our support to the local communities we have provided critical services and allowed the Iraqi people to return to their normal lives. Our recent humanitarian relief packages have provided food and other basic needs to more than 5,000 disadvantaged families in the Tiger area.

Our recent Farmer Assistance Program provided seed and fertilizer to more than 1,000 farmers who have been troubled through years of drought. As we have partnered with the local government, we have provided hope to the Iraqi families; they now see the future as they move toward a normal and stable life.

Our achievements are the result of strong work by the entire Tiger team. From our Soldiers on daily combat patrols to our Troopers supporting the fight, the entire squadron can be proud of what we have accomplished.

Every man has done his job and

provided an invaluable service to his fellow Soldier, to the squadron and to our Army.

I especially want to recognize all our attachments and enablers (from our signal platoon, to our HUMINT Teams, to our partnered

MITT teams); everyone embraced the challenges of this difficult mission and joined together to achieve our common goal – peace and stability in our area.

As always, the support from our families and friends back home has been a critical part in what we do. It is their freedom, their love and their future that we keep in mind as we endeavor to perform our solemn duty to our nation.

As we move toward the final months of the deployment, those things that have made us successful thus far will ensure our success until we finish our mission and return home.

Our leaders and Soldiers have truly embodied the tenets of Tenacity, Initiative, Gallantry, Efficiency and Readiness.

Tiger will maintain our vigilance and will remain to the end Tiger Strong.

**Teeth of the Regiment
Tiger 6**

SABRE

2nd Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment

Lt. Col. Paul Calvert

Sabre Squadron Commander

As the squadron nears the end of this combat deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, it is with great pride that we as a squadron would like to say a heartfelt thanks to the families and friends who have been so supportive of us and our mission.

Your thoughts and prayers have sustained us and provided the strength and encouragement for us to finish strong. It is not lost on our formation the sacrifice by that of our family and friends and we are forever in your debt.

Our repositioning to Ninewa Province has facilitated a reunion of sorts for the squadron. Eagle Troop has been reattached to the squadron while Heavy and Sapper companies, still attached to Thunder Squadron, are close by on FOB Marez.

Leaders and Troopers are rekindling relationships that had been put on hold due to distance and missions at hand. The squadron is starting to feel whole again. Unfortunately though, we suffered the loss of a great leader on Nov. 21. Sgt. 1st Class Miguel Wilson, Eagle Troop headquarters platoon sergeant and mortar section sergeant, died while trying to save the life of one of his men. He will be sorely missed within our ranks and we pray for strength and comfort of his entire family.

To sum up in a few words the accomplishments of our squadron during this deployment is truly impossible. There is little doubt however, that our formation has been extremely successful in accomplishing our mission.

Vince Lombardi once said the "dictionary is the only place success comes before work. Hard work is the price you pay for success." Hard work and adherence to standards and discipline have been the bedrock of our Troopers and our formations.

The achievements and mission

accomplishment that we have realized is the product of the combined effort of each Trooper that fills our ranks. The Troopers are our greatest asset. It has been inspiring to watch as they have taken care of one another during combat operations and collectively enabled the success of our formations. They have routinely displayed tremendous initiative, personal courage, compassion and commitment during the execution of their duties and responsibilities in a very harsh environment. They are heroes and worthy of praise for all that has been accomplished.

Likewise, the hard work of the formations that make up our squadron has enabled tremendous success. Their willingness to learn, remain flexible and adaptable and work as a team in an ever changing environment has been the corner stone to our success in combat.

Sabre Squadron wishes everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Just like a young child waiting to open Christmas presents, we can hardly contain our excitement as we prepare for redeployment and the forthcoming reunion with our families. Until then, we are committed to finishing strong.

Sabre Ready!
Sabre 6



Courtesy Photo

Fox Troop, 2/3 ACR Soldiers' shadows are cast against a wall as they patrol a village during an operation in Diyala Province. Sabre spent most of their deployment in that AO.

THUNDER

3rd Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment



Lt. Col. Keith Barclay
Thunder Squadron
Commander

When the first pair of boots belonging to a Thunder Squadron Trooper touched the ground at the LSA Diamondback airfield, it was already apparent that change was in the air for Mosul and for the northern portion of Ninewah Province in Iraq.

Immediately following the first pair of boots came the massive laboring, logistics machine that would bring thousands more pairs of boots, along with the tracks, wheels, and weapons needed for the squadron to do what it came to do.

In intricately planned waves, personnel, vehicles, and weapons began rolling into the LSA and FOB Marez.

As they arrived, they paired with their counterparts and learned the routes, streets, alleys, and neighborhoods they would soon be responsible for. For some, Diamondback and Marez would be a stop along the way to their final destination, FOB Sykes, further west into the province to the remote areas of Tall Afar, Rabiya and Sinjar. As quickly as possible, the squadron fanned out across its massive piece of terrain, doing what Cavalry Troopers do best, conducting reconnaissance and security operations.

The first few weeks of a combat deployment typically serve as an assessment phase. Commanders and staff would normally use the first weeks not necessarily for massive combat actions, but to

decide their goals for their areas of responsibility and layout timelines to achieve their goals.

Thunder Squadron, given their large land mass and organized enemy factions, was not afforded a very long assessment phase, instead they entered the fight head first within the first few days of beginning patrols leading up to the transfer of authority. Mosul, specifically, was home to neighborhoods and streets that were previously untraveled on by Coalition Forces.

Iraq Security Forces in some areas had not left their few combat outposts in months and the enemy had several routes to choose from that were virtually unguarded to move their fighters and weapons.

In the west, Thunder Squadron inherited a relatively peaceful Tall Afar, but also the small villages that surrounded it that served as safe havens for terrorist training and staging. The long stretch of Syrian border, to include the point of entry facility at Rabiya, also now belonged to Thunder and would be theirs to improve and oversee. Clearly, the squadron had its task laid out for it and the stakes were incredibly high, not just for the squadron, but more so for the Iraqi people who call Ninewah Province home. Their very lives and safety were in the hands of the squadron, and the Iraqi Security Forces they were quickly pairing up with.

After officially assuming control of the area of operations, Thunder Squadron attacked the enemy on four distinct fronts. The first two were conducting

combined area security and reconnaissance operations; the third, standing up effective and legitimate Iraqi Security Forces. Lastly, conducting effective civil affairs projects aimed at increasing quality of life for the local citizens.

At times, Thunder Squadron Troopers were called upon to execute all four kinds of these missions in a single day, or in some cases, a single patrol. Initial successes in combat operations came through pinpoint targeted raids with Thunder Troopers paired with Special Operations Forces, Iraqi Security Forces, or on their own based on analyzed intelligence. These raids remained a constant way for the squadron to continue attacking the leadership of terrorist cells and remove their assumption of safety and comfort as they attempted to move through the province undetected.

Other successful combat operations came in the form of deliberate route clearance missions. Thunder Squadron engineers coupled with armored security elements traversed thousands of miles of routes, removing murderous IEDs in every form the enemy attempted to place them. On top of the daily route clearance missions, the squadron also executed several successful route sanitation missions on main roads through Mosul.

These missions were one of the few that encompassed all four main goals: initial clearances

See "Thunder" Page 17.

LONGKNIFE

4th Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment



Lt. Col. Todd Royar
Longknife Squadron Commander

As this issue goes to print, the squadron and the Regiment are getting ready to complete their missions for this deployment.

In many respects it seems like only yesterday that we arrived in theater because the pace has been nonstop. In many respects it also seems like it has been much longer than a year when you look back at all the Troopers in the unit have accomplished.

The squadron has done some amazing things during the past year. Most notably, the Troopers successfully replaced,

and were subsequently replaced, by units more than twice its size – not once but twice. With one intra-theater move from Taji to BIAP and with a quarter of the squadron moving again to Al Kut, no one has been bored.

During the deployment, the squadron safely pumped more than three million gallons of fuel and ran two of the busiest FARPs in Iraq. The squadron maintained an impressive operational readiness rate of more than 83 percent for both its AH 64 and UH 60 aircraft.

The squadron not only provided support for itself, but also ran many functions normally run at the brigade level to include ammunition transfer and holding, bulk fuel storage receipt and issue, dining facility management, and aviation intermediate level maintenance.

All of the achievements listed above are because of the great Troopers in the squadron. Through a combined effort by all, the maintainers of the squadron kept the aircraft and support equipment operational resulting in readiness rates that never failed to accomplish the mission.

These unsung heroes enabled our UH 60 crews to effectively provide support to both the 4th Infantry and 10th Mountain Division command groups and

our AH 64 crews to effectively provide security to an untold number of Soldiers on the ground. From the Soldier in the PAC to the refueler and ammunition handler in the FARP, everyone played a part in the success of the unit. Ultimately our presence helped enable increased security for the Iraqi people.

For those of us deployed, a debt of gratitude also goes out to those at home. I believe the adage that “it is harder to stay at home than deploy” is absolutely true. Your support has been invaluable during the course of the deployment.

It is important that we finish strong. Often the legacy of a unit is measured in large part by how they finish their tour – because that is the only portion of time that the incoming unit actually sees. Equally important is that we set our successors up for success.

Within Longknife, we will complete our Relief in Place at multiple locations (BIAP, Al Kut and Kalsu) and we will

complete it with multiple different units and organizations. It certainly will not be easy, but we owe it to those that follow us to give them the best hand-over we possibly can. Most importantly, we want to ensure that all of us come home safely.

As we prepare to go home, I encourage everyone to take advantage of the upcoming re-integration period. That includes not only getting the most out of the classes to help those of us deployed reintegrate with our families and friends for life outside a combat zone, but also to taking some well-deserved time off. All Soldiers will be afforded up to 30 days of block leave and it is important that we take advantage of that time to relax.

Command Sgt. Maj. Lindsey and I are convinced that there are no finer Soldiers in the Army than those we have the honor to work with.

“Command Sgt. Maj. Lindsey and I are *convinced* that there are no *finer Soldiers* in the Army than those we are *honored* to work with.”

-- Lt. Col. Todd Royar
commander, 4th Sqdrn., 3d ACR

Longknife 6

MULESKINNER

Support Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment



Lt. Col. Steven Cook
Muleskinners Squadron
Commander

Muleskinners have made many accomplishments in support of the Regiment and Iraqi Security Forces during the past 15 months.

The Regimental Area of operations covered an area more than 24,000 square miles, about the size of the state of Maryland. Muleskinners went everywhere in this space where there were either Coalition or Iraqi Security Forces, supporting not just Regimental units, but also numerous transition teams, Marines, and two Iraqi divisions. Regardless the task, time or location, Muleskinners provided the support required to allow the Regiment to accomplish all assigned tasks and missions. Below is a short recap of our accomplishments.

Supply and Transportation Troop has definitely lived up to their name of "Packhorse" by logging more than 400,000 miles carrying 2,922 pallets of bottled water, 36,500 gallons of bulk water, 99,730 meals, 100 short tons of ammunition and explosives, M1 tanks, M3 Bradleys, MRAPs, other heavy equipment, 409,000 gallons of JP8, 152,650 gallons of MOGAS, 11,000 gallons of diesel fuel and more than 500 concrete T-Walls barriers.

Keeping Packhorse on the road and the rest of the squadron's equipment running was Maintenance Troop. They

provided the maintenance and services required to keep the squadron's vehicle fleet operational. The Blacksmiths completed more than 3,000 jobs during the deployment keeping Support Squadron and all units assigned or attached to the Regiment operational. In addition, Blacksmith ran the third largest SSA in northern Iraq, processing hundreds of thousands of much needed repair parts and other critical supplies. The Iraqi army also benefited from the dedicated efforts of several Blacksmith Troopers who partnered with various units within the two Iraqi divisions, training on repair parts management as well as maintenance training on Iraqi purchased HMMWVs.

In order to keep the vehicles on the road and equipment working in the shops, Support Squadron needed all Soldiers fit to fight on a daily basis. Medical Troop diligently worked to ensure that all personnel assigned or attached to the squadron remained healthy and able to accomplish their missions. During the deployment, Scalpel provided treatment in more than 10,000 sick call appointments. In addition Scalpel issued all required immunizations, provided mass casualty planning and support. Scalpel not only operated on FOB Marez, but also provided an aid station out west on FOB Sykes. The Iraqi army also benefited from Scalpel's expertise in medical logistics, working with the divisions and regional medical ware house to improve

flow of needed medical supplied to the units as well as supporting Combined Medical Engagements with the Iraqi army in the villages and towns throughout northern Iraq.

The 89th Chemical Company did their share by operating the Regimental Detention Facility located on LSA Diamondback. Though working outside of their MOS', the Chem Dawgs quickly adjusted to the new mission and provided an invaluable resource to the 3d ACR. The 89th Chemical Company received and processed more than 275 detainees and facilitated more than 500 detainee interviews, gaining critical information on insurgent and criminal activity within the area of operation. Never losing focus of their core competencies, Chem Dawgs participated in several FOB-level force protection exercises, displaying their ability to respond to a toxic chemical incident on the FOB.

The multitude of actions and tasks above could not be accomplished without the expert planning and oversight provided by the Headquarters and Headquarters Troop. The squadron staff and support operations sections worked diligently to provide the information and resources required to conduct the daily missions. The squadron's success was predicated by the diligent planning and oversight by the staff and the hard work and dedication in execution by all the

See "RSS," Page 27.

1-8 Infantry Bn.

3rd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division



Lt. Col. Christopher Johnson
1-8 INF Commander

I want to ensure that each of you understand the tremendous impact your operations over the last year have had on the people of Mosul, the American people, and the world.

Your consistently-disciplined operations that reinforced the rule of law and demonstrated dignity and respect, have shown the Iraqi people what American Soldiers can accomplish.

Your effective balance of combat and civic actions has given the Iraqi people the opportunity to further their democracy, which we will see Jan. 31, 2009.

You have witnessed, along with your Iraqi counterparts, that determined men with guns can do a lot, but there are some things they can't do, and the better you understand this relationship, the more valuable you will be to our nation, whether serving in the Army or out of uniform.

There have been many changes in AO Eagle since my last commander's column. The changes are very positive and provide an example of what can be achieved through determination and hard work.

The Iraqi Security Forces have taken their ability to plan and execute combat operations with limited Coalition Force support to new heights.

The Iraqi army has established multiple new combat outposts in AO Eagle. These COPs will provide an additional capability for the ISF to project combat power in their area of operations. A majority of the ISF have only been in sector for two months. The establishment of the new COPs coupled with the increase in combat patrols has made a significant positive impact on the local population.

The Fighting Eagles have noticed an increase in

local citizens using the "Tips Line" to identify the enemy and his activities. During the next couple of months, we expect this trend to continue and security gains to increase based on the competence and professionalism of our ISF partners.

We are excited about the establishment of the Mosul Reconstruction Operations Center. The addition of this capability will complement the security gains by the ISF. Our support to the MROC assisting the citizens of east Mosul will allow the Government of Iraq to achieve more long-term, nonlethal effects.

Although we have made some significant progress,

this is not a time to rest on our laurels. We have an important transition to focus on the mission while we simultaneously hand over our equipment and ensure the follow-on unit is set up for immediate success.

Oh, by the way, we will be supporting provincial elections during this time, so our plate will be full. We owe it to our replacements to teach

them everything we know about our complex, challenging, and lethal environment.

Do not lose focus on the tactical mission; we have to bring our "A-game" every day until we arrive at Fort Carson.

Do not lose accountability of our equipment; we will need it for the future. Be safe ... don't take safety for granted; a vehicle falling off a HET can be just as dangerous as an IED.

Maintain our high standards. Remember, in the Army, nothing happens without a sergeant telling a Soldier what to do, and nothing happens safely unless our sergeants are focusing on safety. We want and deserve to go home, but we need to do so safely,

"Fighting Eagles, I could not be more *proud* of the manner in which you have carried out your *mission* and conducted yourself during the last 12 months."

**-- Lt. Col. Christopher Johnson
commander, 1-8 Inf. Regt.**

See "Fighting Eagles," Page 27.

94th Engineer Bn.

18th Engineer Brigade



Lt. Col. Luke Leonard
94th Eng. Bn. Commander

We are closing in our last month in Mosul serving alongside the 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment.

It is hard to believe the changes we have witnessed since last December when we first moved here from Tikrit. It started with the construction of the Tigris River float bridge at Qayarraah after the highway bridge was brought down by an insurgents bomb. Next came operations on Route Tampa, where the incessant dangers from IEDs were hindering the resupply of Marez and the movement of oil to Turkey.

We added an additional four construction platoons in January and February and started a program of Combat Outpost (COP) and checkpoint construction that allowed the U.S. and Iraqi Army to sustain a presence throughout the city. As each new station was built and manned, the security situation in that neighborhood improved.

The biggest of these stations, like COP Rock and COP Rabiyy, served as joint security sites – housing both U.S. and Iraqi Army Soldiers around the clock. Dozens of others followed.

In March, with the addition of the 59th Engineer Company, the battalion began route clearance patrols inside of Mosul that had been impossible the year before because of the security situation.

Since then, the company has conducted more than

800 patrols found and cleared more than 120 IEDs in the city and trained the new Iraqi route clearance platoons to do the same.

Through the summer, our COP and checkpoint construction continued in support of the Iraqi Police. As the checkpoints stretched out along the arteries that lead into Mosul, the IED threat in those same areas dried up.

Troop movements into Ninewah Province kept us busy as we built company- and battalion-sized COPs near Ash Shura, on LSA Diamondback and in Diyala Province.

The work keeps coming from surprising directions – most recently with the repairs to a major airfield in the western Desert that had remained unusable since 2003. Once the airfield was opened for business, and protected by a seven mile-long berm, the U.S. Marine Corps poured in to continue stability operations in the area and to shut down the insurgents' movement in and out of Syria.

The work we have been able to accomplish was made possible by the incredible support in both supplies and security we received from the maneuver battalions of the regiment and from the fine regimental staff.

As our time here draws short, let me say for all of the Soldiers of Task Force Wolverine, that it has been our honor to serve as part of the Rifles Team! Veterans!

Wolverines!



Soldiers from the 77th Engineer Company, 94th Engineer Battalion construct a building at a Combat Outpost.

Capt. Bert Uyenco

SABER

6th Squadron, 17th Air Cavalry Regiment



Lt. Col. Nicholas R. Snelson
6-17 Cav Regt. Commander

When Task Force Saber arrived in Kuwait, we knew it would be hot, but even the most seasoned of us were not prepared for the extreme difference in climate between Alaska and Kuwait.

The Soldiers adapted extremely well to the climate and excelled in all RSOI tasks placed before them. Whether it was 130 degrees on the close quarter's marksmanship range, performing maintenance on helicopters, or flying missions, the Soldiers' performance is something any leader would be proud of. When the training was complete and we finally were able to move to our assigned areas of operation, the Soldiers of Task Force Saber were ready.

Task Force Saber conducted our Transfer of Authority Ceremony Aug. 24 and assumed the mission. Task Force Saber rose to the challenge and took the fight to the enemy without losing any of the gains the previous unit left us with.

Our B Troop, "Blackfoot," has been assigned the vast expanses of the western Ninewa and has been taking the fight to interdict smugglers and foreign fighters. With more than 3,000 hours flown since arrival, Blackfoot has operated in an austere environment and succeeded where others have not while supporting a myriad of warfighters and missions, a testimony to the flexibility and ingenuity of the cavalry soldier.

D/123 or "Renegades," our UH-60 company, routinely fly in excess of 100 hours weekly in support of Rifles express, 3d ACR, air assaults, and general parts and passenger movement. To date, Renegade has flown nearly 2,600 hours and moved everything and anything you could imagine, transporting nearly 1,100 passengers and more than 175 tons of cargo and equipment.

The backbone of the Renegades, are the crew chiefs and maintainers. On more than one occasion my command sergeant major has witnessed a mechanic being woken up to run out to the aircraft and repair it, and within an hour, the aircraft and its crew are back on mission.

Crazy Horse Troop, assigned specifically to Mosul

has increased their air coverage over the city and continues this presence to assist in the stability of the region. In a twenty four hour period, there is always a scout weapons team in the air ready to react to troops in contact, provide convoy security, and assist in the capture of HVTs in support of the Regiment. Crazy Horse flew more than 4,000 hours in less than 90 days, and is a testimony to the effort that goes into supporting the mounted cavalryman in and around Mosul.

This entire effort would not be possible if it wasn't for the efforts of the maintenance teams from D Troop (AVUM) in both Mosul and Tall Afar. This troop performs all levels of maintenance on the aircraft, thereby insuring that they are ready on a moment's notice to support any mission tasked to the squadron.

Through the efforts of the Soldiers and their leaders, this troop had managed a 91 percent operational readiness rate for the last three months and supported more than 12,000 flight hours.

Aces Troop, OPCON to 1-10 ARB, at COB Speicher, continues to provide the very important duty of convoy security and IED prevention and interdiction. Through the 3,000 hours they have flown since assuming mission, they ensure that all convoys running rations, mail, fuel, ammo, Soldiers and supplies are able to get to their locations safely under their watchful eyes.

The FST or "Ironhorse" is the troop that allows all the other units to accomplish their mission. On Nov. 9, Ironhorse broke the million gallon mark for fuel pumped across the squadron. They provide fuel not only to our helicopters but all aviation unit assets in the theatre. From Ospreys, C-130s, C-17s and a myriad of other aircraft, they pump the fuel and they do it safely. The maintainers keep all the equipment operational allowing the fuel to flow and the convoys to roll. It has been my honor to watch these young men and women turn into Soldiers during these last three months of combat operations. We continue to Charlie Mike and make things happen, and I look forward to many more great accomplishments before the mission is complete.

Out Front!

“Thunder,” From Page 11. —

usually resulted in enemy contact; Iraqi Security Force elements were always present; and safer roads in which to travel increased the quality of life for Mosul locals while providing freedom of movement for coalition and Iraqi Security Forces.

To build on the initial operational successes that Thunder Squadron enjoyed, they employed a military tactic as ancient as war itself: outposting. Given the well-organized and hidden insurgency that was in place in northern Ninewah, the most effective way to not just fight but eradicate them, was to build up the Iraqi Security Forces and place them in fortified positions amongst the populace.

Constructing a combat outpost is not a simple task. Detailed coordination and planning were required from the squadron's staff to ensure the correct location had been chosen, the litany of necessary materials were available, and most importantly, the combat strength, both coalition and Iraqi, was available to man the outpost after its construction.

When the planning and preparation phases were complete, engineers, accompanied by their security elements from the ground owning troops and companies constructed the new outposts.

In some cases, the outposts were built off of existing structures such as COPs Rabiya and Inman in Mosul. In other instances, the COPs were built literally from the sand they were surrounded by, which was the case in the remote villages of Seegar and Ressala.

The combat outposts built by the squadron during its 15 month tour served a simple purpose, placing Coalition and Iraqi forces where once there were

none. However, their effect was anything but simple in the ways their presence changed the enemy and the vice like grip he used to maintain on the local population.

Building combat outposts and standing up the Iraqi Security Forces were tasks that Thunder continued to execute throughout their deployment. Gains in these two areas gave the squadron incredible flexibility to shift its' focus to building and restoring a once beautiful and prosperous region of Iraq.

Thunder attacked this goal as it did every other objective, beginning with careful planning and preparation, followed by dogged determination to execute successfully. Thunder Troopers paired up with civil affairs Soldiers and local government officials to determine what renovation and construction work needed to be done and how best to resource and secure the workers to ensure quality work.

As progress was made, Iraqi citizens noticed how their neighborhoods were improving. Roads that were previously unusable were now easily travelled, markets that before had been closed through violence and intimidation were re-opened and an economy that was previously nonexistent, finally began to show signs of life.

All of these gains in civilian quality of life and local governance would not have been possible without hard fought area security operations conducted early on in the squadron's deployment.

From November 2007 to January 2009, Thunder Squadron fought hard to ensure that the cities and villages within the Thunder area of operations were safer and more prosperous places. Proof of the fruits of

Thunder's labor is in the lives of the Iraqi citizens, but recognition and appreciation for Thunder's accomplishments belong to the Troopers. The Soldiers, who exemplified the very best of their profession through 15 long months of dedicated and valorous service, are the primary reason why Thunder Squadron was able to achieve as much as it did.

The Soldiers endured many hours of thankless duty either on patrol, at an outpost or observation point, or conducting the many logistics tasks necessary to keep the squadron fighting every day.

They faced both spectrums of harsh weather from bone-chilling cold, to unbearable heat. They faced a determined and despicable enemy and fought him wherever and whenever he surfaced. They lived through the indescribable horrors of combat, bearing witness to scenes they will never forget.

Most of all, they sacrificed. For some it was simply giving 15 months of their lives away from friends and family, for others it was a physical sacrifice of wounds that will alter their lives forever.

Paramount to all was those select few; their ultimate sacrifices will never be forgotten, and who will live on in the brothers and sisters they served with, and the people they died to keep free.

In January 2009, the last pair of boots belonging to a Thunder Squadron Trooper will step off the tarmac of the LSA Diamondback and FOB Sykes airfields. The squadron will have transferred its authority to an incoming unit that will have the enormous task of building on Thunder's achievements and maintaining the course of change that so many fought so hard to bring about.

THUNDER!

Thunder 6

Building bonds

Tiger Squadron, Iraqi army come together for organizational day

Sgt. Keith M. Anderson
16th SB Public Affairs

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE Q-WEST, Iraq — Cavalry Soldiers spent a day with Iraqi army soldiers to play sports and cook out at the IA compound on the base here, known as “FOB Hawk,” Nov. 2.

The cavalry Soldiers of Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1st Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, held their first organizational day with the Iraqis to relax and strengthen bonds, said Capt. Jeff Johnson, commander, HHT, 1st Sqdrn., 3d ACR.

“It has been a long, hard fight for these guys and this is an opportunity to step back from the hard work we’ve done and reinforce the bonds of brotherhood we’ve built with the Iraqis,” Johnson said.

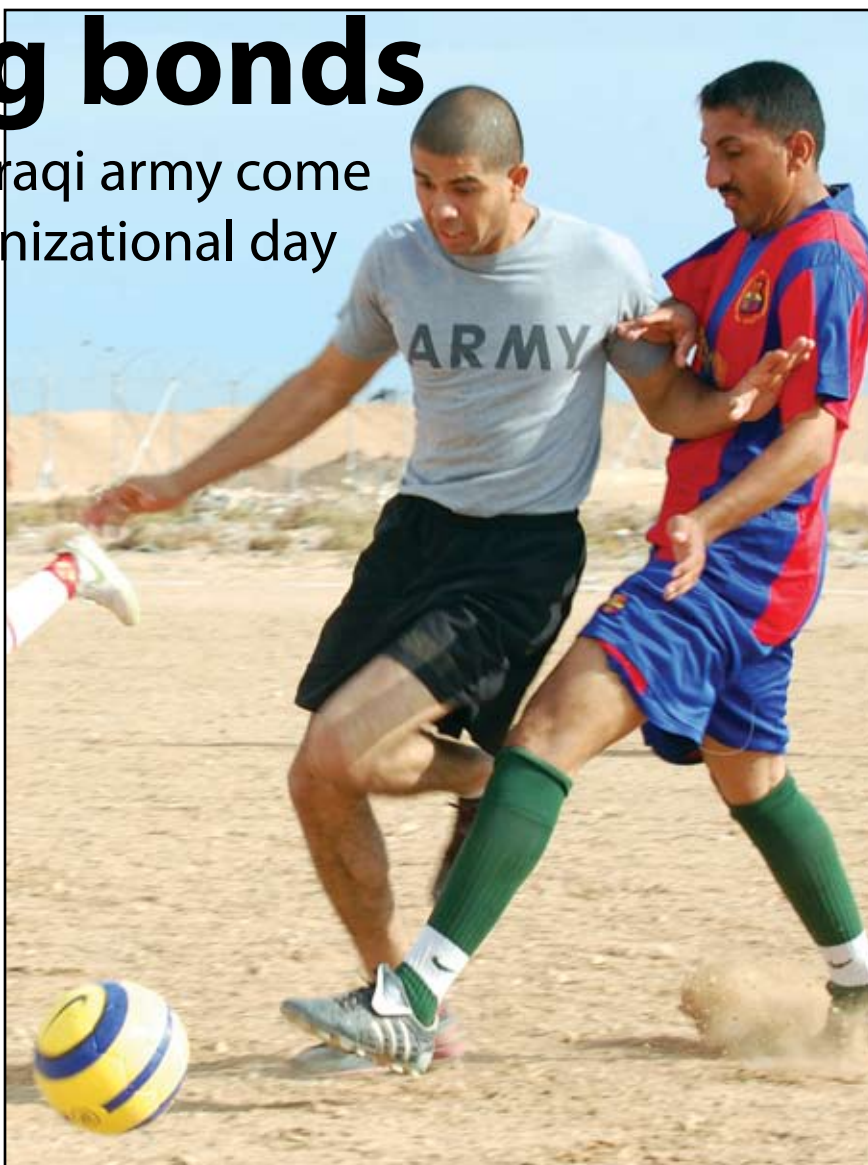
The 29-year-old from Iowa City, Iowa, and the Soldiers of “Roughrider Troop,” deployed to Iraq in October 2007, on a 15-month tour.

The day’s first event, the soccer game, went as expected with the Iraqi “Hawks” defeating the cavalry “Tigers” 2-0.

Iraqi army 1st Lt. Arif Awwam, supply officer in charge, 7th Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division, was composed after he scored the second goal for the Hawks.

“I feel like any player when he scores a goal, very happy,” Awwam said, through a translator. “It was a very hard competition, it wasn’t easy.”

The 29-year-old from Dohak City, Iraq, said he appreciated the opportunity to play soccer with the



Photos by Sgt. Keith Anderson

Pvt.2 Fren Navarro from Support Platoon, Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1st Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, and an Iraqi army soldier from 7th Brigade, 2nd Iraqi Army Division, fight for the ball during a soccer match at Forward Operating Base Hawk, an Iraqi Army compound on Contingency Operating Base Q-West, Nov. 2. Soldiers from HHT and the Iraqi army unit joined together for an organizational day to relieve stress and build camaraderie. During the event, Soldiers from the two units played a variety of sports and enjoyed an American style cookout.

American Soldiers.

“It’s very good because it builds strong bonds with each other,” Awwam said

Spc. Brian Culley, automated logistics specialist, HHT, said he never expected to be playing sports with Iraqis.

“I figured there’d be lots of missions,” said Culley, a 20-year-old from Red Oak, Texas, on his first deployment. “Honestly, I thought it was going to be



Soldiers from HHT, 1st Sqdrn., 3d ACR, play a game of volleyball during the organizational day with the Iraqis. Capt. Jeff Johnson, HHT commander, said, "It has been a long, hard fight for these guys and this is an opportunity to step back from the hard work we've done and reinforce the bonds of brotherhood we've built with the Iraqis."

a lot worse (in Iraq). I thought we were going to be attacked a lot more."

Culley, who played soccer at Red Oak High School, wasn't surprised the Iraqis beat the American Soldiers.

"They're really good at soccer," he said. "They've



An Iraqi army soldier picks up a dodge ball while keeping his eye on the Tiger Squadron Soldiers during the organizational day.

been playing since they were kids."

The Iraqi and American Soldiers were evenly matched for the next event, volleyball, though team Hawk won the three-game series by a few points.

After taking time to eat steaks, burgers, hot dogs, corn on the cob, and other Americana, it was time for the final event, dodge ball.

This time it was the Tiger's turn to dominate. Cavalry Soldiers had an advantage because they were more flexible and had better aim, said Sgt. 1st Class Rolly Azurin, platoon sergeant, HHT, 1st Sqdrn., 3rd ACR.

"I'm very competitive, but really, it's just good participation between Iraqi army and U.S. Soldiers," said the 30-year-old from Yakima, Wash. "It's good motivation and a chance to relieve some stress."

Iraqi Army Col. Hazim Serhan Hussein, deputy commander, 7th Bde., 2nd IA Div., said events like the organizational day will improve relationships between the two armies and increase operational coordination.

"It's really useful," Hussein said, through a translator. "It introduces us to each other and improves coordination between the U.S. and Iraqi armies."

3d ACR tests Army program for redeploying equipment

Master Sgt. Tim Volkert
3d ACR Public Affairs

The 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment's first step toward redeployment is also the test for an Army pilot program.

Throughout September and October, 3d ACR units at Contingency Operating Base Q West and Forward Operating Base Marez started the Early Retrograde Equipment, or ERE process, and moved some of its tanks, Bradleys and other assorted vehicles to staging areas for shipment back to the United States.

The ERE process is a new program designed to speed up how

the Army redeploys and resets its combat power platforms, its tanks and Bradleys, and get them back to units faster than the current redeployment methods allow.

What makes the program different is that the 3d ACR is turning in this equipment as complete systems, which means all of the assorted computers, subsystems and other components are turned in together, said Chief Warrant Officer Nicole E. Woodyard, regimental reset manager, Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, Regimental Support Squadron, 3d ACR.

"No one has ever turned in their equipment in theater as a

complete system before. We are the pilot unit to see how it works," Woodyard said.

Currently, units have to strip down the equipment and computer systems before the vehicles heads back overseas, she said. By sending the equipment into reset as a complete system, everything is upgraded and repaired together, and when it's returned to the unit, they can begin training immediately.

"It will come back in the most current Army configuration, to include all upgrades," Woodyard said.

Another benefit is this process will reduce the risk of loss and



Sgt. 1st Class Brian Flamer

From left, Cpl. Thomas Harkins and Sgt. James Dacyzyn from Bandit Troop, 1st Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, along with other Tiger Squadron Troopers, inventory equipment on their Bradleys before turning them in for redeployment. Throughout September and October, the 3d ACR began redeploying equipment back to the U.S. for repair and reset under a new Army pilot program. The program's goal is to speed up the redeployment process so units can get their equipment back sooner and as a complete system.

damage that can occur, said Sgt. 1st Class Patrick Learn, the Transportation and Logistics section noncommissioned officer in charge for 1st Squadron, 3d ACR.

"I predict a whole lot less

added.

While the current deployment process and the pilot program's schedule for redeploying equipment is basically the same,

"This will be a great *benefit* once all the bugs are worked out, *saving* the Army time and assets."

*-- Sgt. 1st Class Patrick Learn
Transportation and Logistics
NCOIC, 1st Sqdrn., 3d ACR*

property loss investigations with the system coming back as a complete unit," he said. "Commanders will receive their equipment ready for mission rather than piecing it back together.

"It will also be beneficial to the commanders to sign one document rather than several for each individual component," Learn

the new process is much quicker. The end result is that units get their systems back sooner, Learn said.

"This process will allow us to get the combat power systems back about 120 days earlier than in previous deployments," Woodyard said.

That provides major benefits for

the unit when it returns to home station.

"Training with borrowed equipment is not the same as your assigned equipment ... a crew will know the strengths and limitations of equipment they are familiar with," said Learn.

Once this program is complete and the process adjusted based on feedback, the Soldiers of the 3d ACR predict that it will be a great change for how Army units redeploy.

"This will be a great benefit once all the bugs are worked out, saving the Soldiers and the Army both time and assets," Learn said.



Master Sgt. Tim Volkert

Pfc. Omar Rivera from Killer Troop, 3rd Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, moves across the redeployment staging area at Forward Operating Base Marez, Iraq.



Master Sgt. Tim Volkert

Staff Sgt. Willie McClary from Supply and Transportation Troop, Regimental Support Squadron, 3d ACR, ground guides a vehicle at the redeployment staging area on FOB Marez.

MiTT leaves well-trained IA unit behind

Staff Sgt. Kyle J. Richardson
11th PAD

Living without the security and comforts of a forward operating base and inserted in the war-ridden city of Mosul, Iraq, the 3rd Battalion, 5th Brigade, 2nd Military Transition Team, adapted to unfavorable conditions to accomplish their mission.

The journey for 3-5-2 MiTT, began three months prior to deploying in November 2007, said Maj. Chad Arcand, team chief for 3-5-2 MiTT.

Eleven different Soldiers from 11 different units came together at Fort Riley, Kan. to live, eat and train together and eventually form the 3-5-2 MiTT, said Arcand, a native of White Bear Lake, Minn. A MiTT is a selected group of Soldiers responsible for teaching and mentoring select Iraqi army units in military tactics.

While being assigned to a MiTT is not the easiest job, the payoff is worth the hard work, said Capt. Antoine McKinsey, human resource officer with 3-5-2 MiTT.

“Everyone should have the opportunity to live

free and not be afraid to go out and about during everyday-life activities,” McKinsey, a Homer La. native said.

After arriving in Mosul, the team quickly gelled and learned how to work as small unit taking on a big responsibility.

“We are embedded with the Iraqis; sleeping, eating, training, and fighting alongside them,” said Maj. John Ruckauf, the MiTT’s intelligence officer and native of Chicago. “It is a challenging mission, but the MiTT established its reputation represented in our team name — El Jefe, ‘The Boss.’”

The 3-5-2 MiTT spent several months at Combat Outpost Fortitude before making a jump to COP Mountain, said New Orleans native, Sgt. 1st Class Ronald Bogan, maintenance officer for 3-5-2 MiTT.

Once established on COP Mountain, El Jefe embedded with the 3-5-2 Iraqi Army Division and began working together in the once dangerous part of the city.

“On our first mission, it took about 30 minutes of being in our sector before we were engaged by the enemy with RPG and small arms fire,” said



Photos by Staff Sgt. Kyle J. Richardson

Pensacola, Fla. native, Capt. Ken Cook, operations officer with 3rd Battalion, 5th Brigade, 2nd Military Transition Team, returns to his vehicle while his interpreter kicks around a soccer ball with the local children during a school supply drop in the Al Sharif neighborhood in southeastern Mosul, Iraq.



Capt. Antoine McKinsey, human resource officer with 3-5-2 MiTT and Homer, La., native, stops to take a picture with an Iraqi army soldier during a humanitarian aid distribution mission in the village of Yarmijah, Iraq.

Capt. Ken Cook, the MiTT's operations officer and Pensacola, Fla. native. "When we showed up, shops were closing (and) people were running to their homes with the anticipation of something bad happening. Now, we are welcomed by name and shops owners are expecting us to stop and have a cup of Chi."

While assisting the 3-5-2 IA Div., El Jefe was able to help them improve the security of the southeastern part of Mosul, which consists of approximately 70,000 citizens.

"I realized Iraqis wanted what we wanted — to be safe, to have kids, and to live," said Arcand.

When we arrived, there used to be five to seven violent SIGACTS a day, said Arcand. "Now, we have seven to seventeen SIGACTS per month. With the development of a tip line we are able to find the IEDs and caches instead of the IEDs exploding and finding us."

The 3-5-2 MiTT has successfully completed its mission and the 3rd Bn., 5th Bde., 2nd IA Div. is more than ready to take over, said Ruckauf.

"The Iraqi army has made so many critical gains over the course of a year," said Cook. "They are taking on the responsibility of their neighborhoods.

"They have made a concerted effort to say that 'we have had enough and we will not stand by and watch these beautiful communities fall anymore,'"

he said. "They know that they have a big part in the overall fight for this country."

"The three-five-two IA Battalion is an exceptional group of soldiers," said Bogan. "I foresee that they will continue to have an astounding affect on the security and the well being of the people here."

It's been a long road and a tiresome journey said Arcand, but El Jefe has complete confidence that they have left southeastern Mosul in a better and safer condition, as well as, in good hands.



Staff Sgt. Jeremy Kott, a gunner with the 3-5-2 MiTT, mans the turret during a mission to hand out school supplies in Al Sharif and Al Somar neighborhoods in southeastern Mosul, Iraq. Kott is a native of Onkama, Mich.

Retrans Soldiers keep regiment on the network

Pfc. Adam Carl Blazak
11th PAD

Conducting operations around high-altitude terrain can be a communications nightmare.

From losing frequencies to static over the communication network, anything could go wrong. Soldiers with Regimental Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, ensure that the communications network stays clear by working atop the Sinjar and Maqloub Mountains at the regiment's retransmitting sites.

"Sinjar has been in existence since 2003 at least," said Cullman, Ala. native, Staff Sgt. Matthew Blakemore, regimental communications platoon sergeant, RHHT, 3d ACR. "Right now we have about 12 different nets on each mountain.

"Let's say we're trying to transmit long range or around an object," he said. "The (retransmitting) mountains will pull the signal in, boost the strength and rebroadcast it. It extends the range of the voice networks."

Units using networks without retransmitting capabilities can only plan to use their communications within about a 15.5 mile radius.

Blakemore said the retransmitting stations allow the regiment to extend that range to about

56 miles.

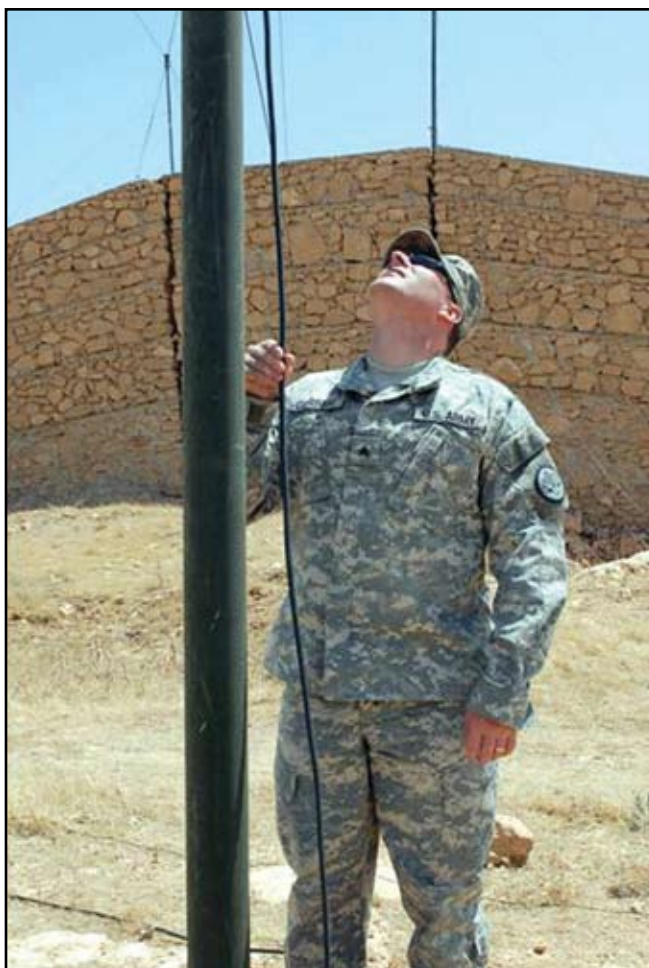
"This is important, because it allows units that are out past that twenty five kilometer range on the other side of the mountain to coordinate for support and report their status from a longer distance," Blakemore said. "It allows command and control basically."

To ensure the networks are functioning properly, Blakemore said Soldiers must "change the communication security of the radios every week."

They must also do a communications and serviceability check each shift change. To do this, they check all the antennas to make sure they are functioning right and do diagnostics on the radios to make sure they're working right," he said. "A lot of it is just listening to the radios and making sure they work."

"Each shift change requires that we check radios," said Athens, Ga. native, Spc. Christopher C. Gabriel, a communications Soldier with RHHT, 3d ACR. "Usually there are anywhere from twenty to thirty radios at a time up on a retransmitting site depending on who we have to help and how many people we're retransmitting for."

With the antennas set up at high altitudes, weather is a constant factor in providing reliable communication. Blakemore said



Pfc. Adam Blazak

Sgt. Eric M. Gerber, a communications noncommissioned officer with Regimental Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, inspects an antenna on top of Sinjar Mountain to ensure it is properly secured. The mountain is home to 14 retransmitting stacks that are used to help facilitate military communication in the surrounding areas.

“My job is *critical* because without constant *communications* with the retransmitting sites, it would be ... a *mission failure*.”

**-- Spc. Christopher Gabriel,
RHHT, 3d ACR**

snowstorms have broken all of the antennas and left his Soldiers without power for a couple days. Wind and lightning storms have also knocked down antennas.

“If there are not critical missions going on, they can lower the antennas,” he said. “But if there’s a snowstorm up on the mountain or a lightning storm and we got guys out doing missions, they have to leave their stuff up and just rebuild it after it gets messed up.”

After communications are up and running, Soldiers living on the mountaintops learn not to expect the conveniences offered on forward operating bases. Blakemore said because of its isolated location and flights arriving on an as needed basis, there can be some inconveniences such as administrative work that the Soldiers need.

“It’s an isolated environment,” he said. “They get resupplied about every ten days. My NCOs are pretty much staying up there for the deployment, but I’m



Entering a communications frequency, Sgt. Richard Martinez Jr., communications noncommissioned officer, 586th Network Support Company, 525th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade, ensures the retransmitting stacks are functioning properly at Sinjar Mountain.

rotating Soldiers out about every month.”

While the job does have some inconveniences, the Soldiers who head to the mountains understand the importance of their work.

“My job is critical because without constant communications with the retransmitting sites it would be ... a mission failure,” Gabriel said.

“If the user can talk and complete the mission without communications being an issue and all the data is getting passed, then it’s a success,” Blakemore said. “Honestly, without them we would not be as nearly as successful in Iraq as we are. A lot of people forget they’re there, but it’s what they do that makes the combatants, the war fighters, successful.”



Spc. Darrell Beiner, a signal support system specialist with Regimental Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, conducts a radio check at the Sinjar Mountain Retransmission site. The signal Soldiers live and work at the retrans sites to ensure the lines of communication remain open.

FRGs begin to prepare for holidays, homecoming

As redeployment draws near, FRGs are joyfully planning events and are abuzz with tons of activities.

Many unit FRGs are making welcome home signs and banners, collecting goodies for Single Soldiers, preparing barracks set up, and decorating unit areas. They're also busy planning both holiday and welcome home parties!

If you leave the area to celebrate with family and friends, **please remember to give Rear Detachment the contact info for your out-of-town visit.**

We're in the home stretch in the deployment! We know everyone is excited as we prepare for these last few weeks and get ready for our Soldiers' return. **Please make sure your FRG and Rear Detachment have the correct family contact information, especially if the family has been away from Fort Hood during the deployment.**

We can't contact you to let you know when your Soldier is returning if we can't get in touch with you!

The Regiment is currently setting up a Regimental Phone Bank and a link on the Regiment's page of the Fort Hood Web site to list flight information and times for welcome home ceremonies. As soon as Rear Detachment receives manifests with Soldiers listed on flights, we will call families to let them know. Again, it is crucial that we have current family contact information.

Remington Troop has had several FRG meetings during the past few months. The FRG has been making holiday banners to send to their Troopers. They've

also been working hard to plan their troop holiday party in December. The party is scheduled for Dec. 12 and will include a visit from Santa. Remington is also planning a barracks project to set up rooms for redeploying single Soldiers. They're still looking for volunteers to help. If you're interested, contact your FRG leader.

Tiger continues gearing up for redeployment by including reunion training at every FRG meeting. The Tiger holiday party is set for Dec. 9 at Oveta Culp. On Dec. 12 Tiger will take a drive out to BLORA for Nature in Lights. Tiger Rear Detachment has arranged for several vans to drive families. Tiger is also planning a squadron bowling day Dec. 22. Individual Tiger troops are also planning welcome home activities and barracks preparations.

Sabre Squadron is holding a squadron holiday party Dec. 6. They will also discuss redeployment information at the event and of course, Santa will stop by. Sabre committees have been planning for redeployment events like the squadron ball, and squadron barracks set up.

The barracks committee has been making goodie bags and welcome home signs. If you're interested in helping, please contact your FRG. The squadron also completed their "walk to Iraq" and since they already had extra miles and a few more weeks they're walking back!

Thunder Squadron combined business with pleasure for their November squadron FRG meeting at Palmer Theater. They started off with a quick meeting and

finished with a private screening of Beverly Hills Chihuahua, paid for by the squadron. Thunder members continue to participate in the "Sea of Support" project that consists of getting yellow tutus to deployed Soldiers' daughters to wear for welcome home ceremonies. Thunder's single Soldier barracks project is also going well. They are gathering goodies and designing signs for welcome home festivities.

Longknife Squadron is busy planning their squadron holiday party at the Salado Christmas Tree Farm. The party will have tons of activities for Longknife families including hayrides, a BBQ feast, and a visit from Santa. Longknife families will also work on welcome home signs at the event.

The squadron also has committee focusing on their "Single Soldier Project." The committee is assembling goodies for the Soldiers and getting the barracks rooms ready.

Muleskinner families are working hard organizing committees for barracks set up, welcome home signs and other activities. The squadron also has a "Welcome Home and Single Soldier" committee to prepare for redeployment.

The committee will be meeting to assemble goodie bags in December and will be setting up the barracks. Muleskinner families will also be getting together to make banners and welcome home signs for their Troopers.

All the troops will be coming together for a Muleskinner holiday dinner Dec. 20 at Oveta Culp.

See "FRG," Page 27.

“1-8 INF,” From Page 14. —————

professionally, and with our honor. Always do the right thing!

It has been a distinct honor and privilege to serve with the Regiment of Mounted Riflemen and the other superb units that we had the good fortune to work with here in Ninewah. Combat is a team sport and I can't think of a better team that we could have been a part of.

Thank you for your support and we are thankful to have served with each and every one of you.

Fighting Eagles, I could not be more proud of the manner in which you have carried out our mission and conducted yourself during the last 12 months. You have performed magnificently, earning the respect of the Iraqi people and our nation for your acts of courage, compassion, and selfless service.

The sacrifices that both you and your families have made, and the losses we have suffered, cannot be repaid or replaced, but they must be remembered.

America is the land of the free, because of the Brave! We came to Iraq to bring security to the people and give them an opportunity to further their democracy.

You have set the example and demonstrated values that will make the Iraqi Security Forces and Iraqi Government better; making them more responsible for their actions. You have given them the opportunity to make some important choices.

To our families, your support has kept us focused and motivated by knowing you were standing watch on the home front. Thank you!

Fighting Eagles, Strike Fear!

“FRG,” From Page 26. —————

The dinner will be potluck, so check with your FRG to see what your troop is assigned to bring. Santa will be dropping by as well to visit Muleskinners children. This event should be a great opportunity for the squadron's families to come out enjoy some good food and share some holiday cheer.

Lastly, as we get ready for our Soldiers to return, we're filled with a mixture of emotions such as excitement, anticipation, anxiety, and the list goes on. For many Soldiers and families, this is a first deployment. For others, it's

just another in a long line. The Regiment has arranged reunion training for all family members. We've scheduled a variety of dates and times, trying to accommodate different schedules and around the busy holiday season. All of the training will take place at Oveta Culp Soldier & Family Readiness Center. Limited on-site childcare will be available to those who RSVP (please RSVP through your FRG or FRSA).

The training sessions will consist of topics including; reuniting and reintegrating with your Soldier, identifying symptoms of PTSD, suicide awareness, and normal

“RSS,” from Page 13. —————

troops and company. I cannot say enough about the accomplishments of the Troopers of the Regimental Support Squadron, and likewise, cannot thank them enough for their hard work and dedication to the mission. To the families of the deployed Muleskinners,

I also want to thank you for your support and patience during the last 15 months. I look forward to seeing you back at Fort Hood upon the squadron's return. Thank you all for your support and dedication.

Muleskinners!

Muleskinner 6



deployment experiences for Soldiers. Sessions will close with a group discussion.

Thank you to all of our Brave Rifles families for all you do to support your Soldiers. Your support is what makes the Regiment successful. We're almost there, just a few more weeks!

Reunion Training Schedule

January 5 at 6 p.m.

January 7 at 6 p.m.

Caution is key to driving safety when back home

Peter Higgins
Safety and Occupational
Specialist

In just a few weeks, the regiment will begin heading back to home station.

Many Soldiers are anxiously awaiting their chance to get out and drive around and see what has changed since we left. Before getting behind the wheel or on your bike, there are a few things everyone needs to consider.

Did you know that some units have lost more Soldiers on the roads back home than in Iraq?

The Army Combat Readiness Center reports that in fiscal year 2008, 126 Soldiers died on American highways.

Most people think that automobile or motorcycle accidents “won’t happen to me,” however, statistics prove accidents happen far too often. To help prevent you from becoming another statistic, take some time and think about what has changed and how you can best adjust to driving again.

Here are a few things to consider before you hop onto your bike or get behind the wheel of your POV for the first time.

When is the last time you actually looked at your POV or motorcycle? What condition is it in? A good initial inspection can identify any deficiencies with your vehicle and save you from a potential breakdown or accident.

Are the tires properly inflated, do they have enough tread left or are they dry rotted?

Take a quick look underneath

the vehicle or bike to check for fluid leaks and check the engine to ensure the belts, battery and hoses are still operational.

Don’t forget to review your paperwork to ensure that your registration, safety inspection and insurance are current.

As you begin to drive again, pay special attention to your surroundings. A lot has changed at Fort Hood and in the surrounding communities since we deployed. Most of the construction taking place when we left is finished, but more has started.

Did you know there are new exits and entrances on the highways? Even the regular streets have changed with new signs, stop lights and “red light cameras.”

It has been a long time since we have driven faster than about 25 miles per hour. We need to ease back into highway driving and get the feel for driving at faster speeds again.

If you ride a motorcycle or plan on buying one when you return, don’t forget about the safety requirements for riding both on and off post.

If you are riding, you must have a Department of Transportation approved helmet, full finger gloves or mittens, long sleeved shirt and long trousers, boots or over-the-ankle shoes, goggles, wraparound glasses or a full-face shield and a bright colored upper garment (vest or jacket) during the day and a reflective one for night.

All riders must attend the Basic Riders Course. All riders should also take the Advanced Riders

Course and Sport Bike Riders Course.

Your chain of command has information about these courses. Without meeting these requirements, you will not be allowed to bring your bike on post.

One last thing to consider before you set out on the Central Texas roads is the weather. We are returning to Texas during the winter season. Sudden extremes are very common. It may start out sunny and warm and end with freezing rain or snow.

If it is raining, slow down. If you are driving and come to a low area with water covering the road, do not cross through it. We have reported incidents where even Bradleys and tanks have been swept off the road. Find another way around or find a place to wait it out.

One last note is that redeploying Soldiers are not authorized to drive for the first 24 hours upon their return. This is a III Corps policy and it is being enforced.

We want everyone to enjoy their homecoming and the things they have missed while deployed. We just need to ensure we are all being smart and safe as we get used to life back in the states.

Vehicle safety online

For more safety information about automobile and motorcycle safety, visit the U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center at <https://crc.army.mil/home/>

More than 1,400 Soldiers from the Regiment of Mounted Rifleman chose to continue their service to the nation during our deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

This is a true testament to the leadership and the legacy of the Cavalry Trooper. The proud history and the traditions of the Regiment, make serving as a “Brave Rifle” a great moment in any Soldier’s career.

Whether it’s your first assignment after initial training or later during your career, serving in the Regiment only enhances the skills and knowledge of everyone who utters the word AI-EE-YAH!!!

Unfortunately many of us will leave the Regiment upon

redeployment, take your lessons learned and Brave Rifles standards with you. I know that I myself will always place my time with the 3d Armored Cavalry as one of my top assignments during my career.

I hope that you can reflect on your time and come to the

same conclusions. I thank each of you for your service and the opportunity to serve with you in this great organization.

I wish you all the best as you continue your careers or pursue a new direction in the civilian workforce.

Army Retention Program

The Army Retention program recently made the changes listed below:

The maximum re-enlistment period changed from six years to eight years.

Retention Control Points (RCP) for enlisted ranks

RANK	OLD	NEW
SSG	22 YRS	23 YRS
SFC	24 YRS	26 YRS
SFC(P)/1SG/MSG	26 YRS	29 YRS
MSG-1SG(P)/SGM/CSM	30 YRS	32 YRS



Sgt. Matthew Boyd

Col. Michael Bills, commander, 3d ACR, conducts a mass re-enlistment ceremony with Soldiers from Apache Troop, 1st Squadron, 3d ACR, Nov. 7, at COP Apache.

Redeployment training classes are key to successful homecoming for Soldiers, families

Chaplain (Maj.) Larry Holland
Regimental Chaplain

Greetings to all the Troopers, families, and friends of the Regiment, and prayers for a blessed and safe holiday season for all.

It is difficult to believe that as you read this article, Thanksgiving is past and Christmas is just around the corner. Although we will not be home for Christmas, we can see the light at the end of the tunnel and look forward to being home very soon.

That thought brings with it a mix of emotions from joy and excitement to some uncertainty about what life will be like after we return.

Such emotions are normal when we face any major change in our lives, and without a doubt, redeployment after 15 months brings many changes.

The key is how we face change and react to it. Just realizing that change is inevitable can help us to meet it head on and even embrace it in a positive manner instead of feeling threatened or negative about it.

As we prepare for redeployment every Trooper here will attend Redeployment Training Classes to help identify issues around reunion and reintegration and how to deal with such issues.

The same classes will also be made available to family members back home. These classes are being set up by the rear detachment and coordinated

through the Family Readiness Groups.

I encourage all family members to attend these classes to increase their awareness of trends that families may face after deployment and know how to deal with issues and where they can turn to for help when needed.

As Soldiers return home, there will be additional opportunities for families to attend some classes together as a part of the reintegration process.

In addition to the classes that will be held on post, there will be two-day retreats offered before block leave. These chaplain-led retreats will be conducted at a nice resort near Fort Hood and are completely paid for by appropriated money from the Chief of Chaplains.

These retreats will focus on strengthening family relationships and improving communication and problem solving skills.

Each squadron and chaplain is currently identifying everyone that is interested in attending a retreat. All you have to do is sign up. Talk to your chaplain, chain of command, or FRG leader for more information.

One of the important issues that will be addressed in all of the reintegration training is PTSD, or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

A growing number of Soldiers are diagnosed with PTSD after returning from combat and most receive treatment and recover to lead normal lives.

Everyone is exposed to some level of stress in a combat

environment. Stress is a normal and necessary part of life and actually helps keep us alive.

When faced with a dangerous situation it is the "fight or flight" reaction that helps us survive. Reactions and symptoms caused by stress can occur long after the threatening situation has passed.

That is what we call post traumatic stress. Some symptoms include vivid memories or flashbacks, dreams, sleeplessness, change in eating habits, hyper vigilance, withdrawal or isolation, and panic attacks.

These reactions can first occur as long as six months after the initial stress. Most of the time they are short lived and pass. It is when such reactions continue for long periods of time and become so overwhelming that a person has difficulty functioning that the post traumatic stress becomes a Disorder.

Family members can be the first line of defense in identifying PTSD and helping Soldiers seek help. This mental and emotional condition is nothing more to be ashamed of than any physical injury or condition.

The key for Soldiers and family members alike is awareness, patience, and understanding, and simply knowing when and where to seek help. That is the benefit of participating in all the reintegration training.

I encourage everyone to take advantage of the training and the retreats and pray that you will have a great reunion with your loved ones.

REMEMBERING THOSE WHO HAVE FALLEN



SGT Michael Clark
Co. A, 1-8 INF
Oct. 7, 2008



SGT Jose Regalado
Killer Troop, 3/3 ACR
Nov. 12, 2008



SPC Corey M. Shea
Killer Troop, 3/3 ACR
Nov. 12, 2008



CW3 Donald V. Clark
C Troop 6-17 Cav
Nov. 15, 2008



CW2 Christian P. Humphreys
A Troop 6-17 Cav
Nov. 15, 2008



SFC Miguel A. Wilson
Eagle Troop, 2/3 ACR
Nov. 21, 2008



MSG Anthony Davis
2-11-3 MiTT,
Nov. 25, 2008



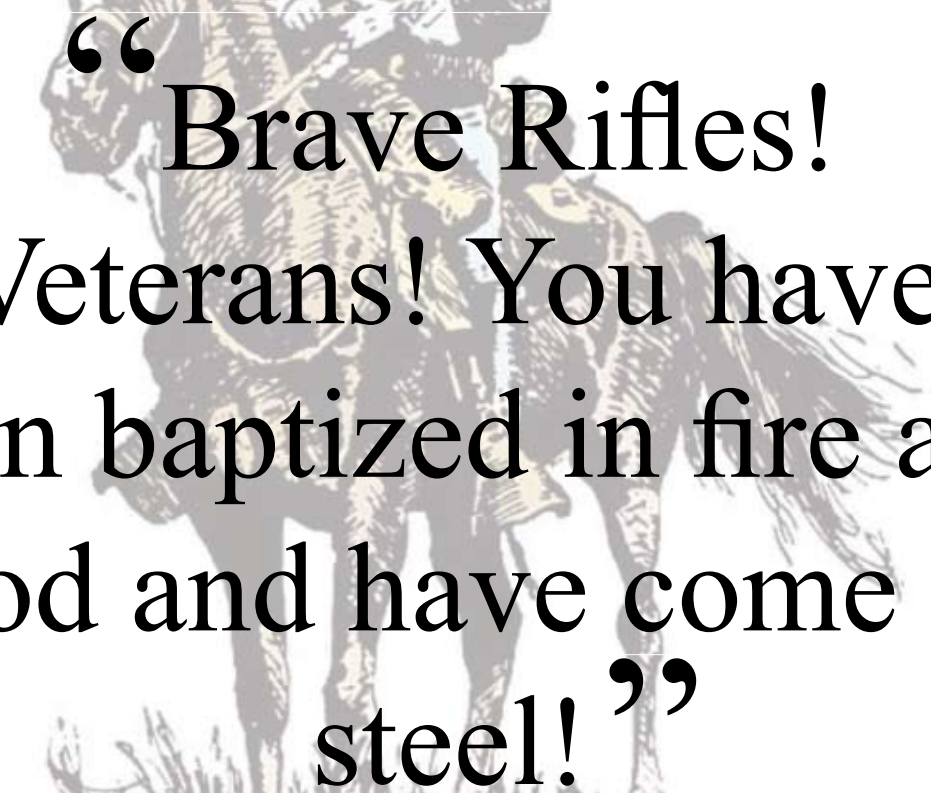
CPT Warren Frank
5th ANGLICO, MNF-W,
Nov. 25, 2008



SGT Solomon T. Sam
523rd Eng. Co.,
84th Eng. Bn.
Dec. 4, 2008



SGT John J. Savage
103rd Eng. Co.,
94th Eng. Bn.
Dec. 4, 2008



“Brave Rifles!
Veterans! You have
been baptized in fire and
blood and have come out
steel!”